



WITH HINTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON

DOMESTIC FURNITURE AND DECORATIONS

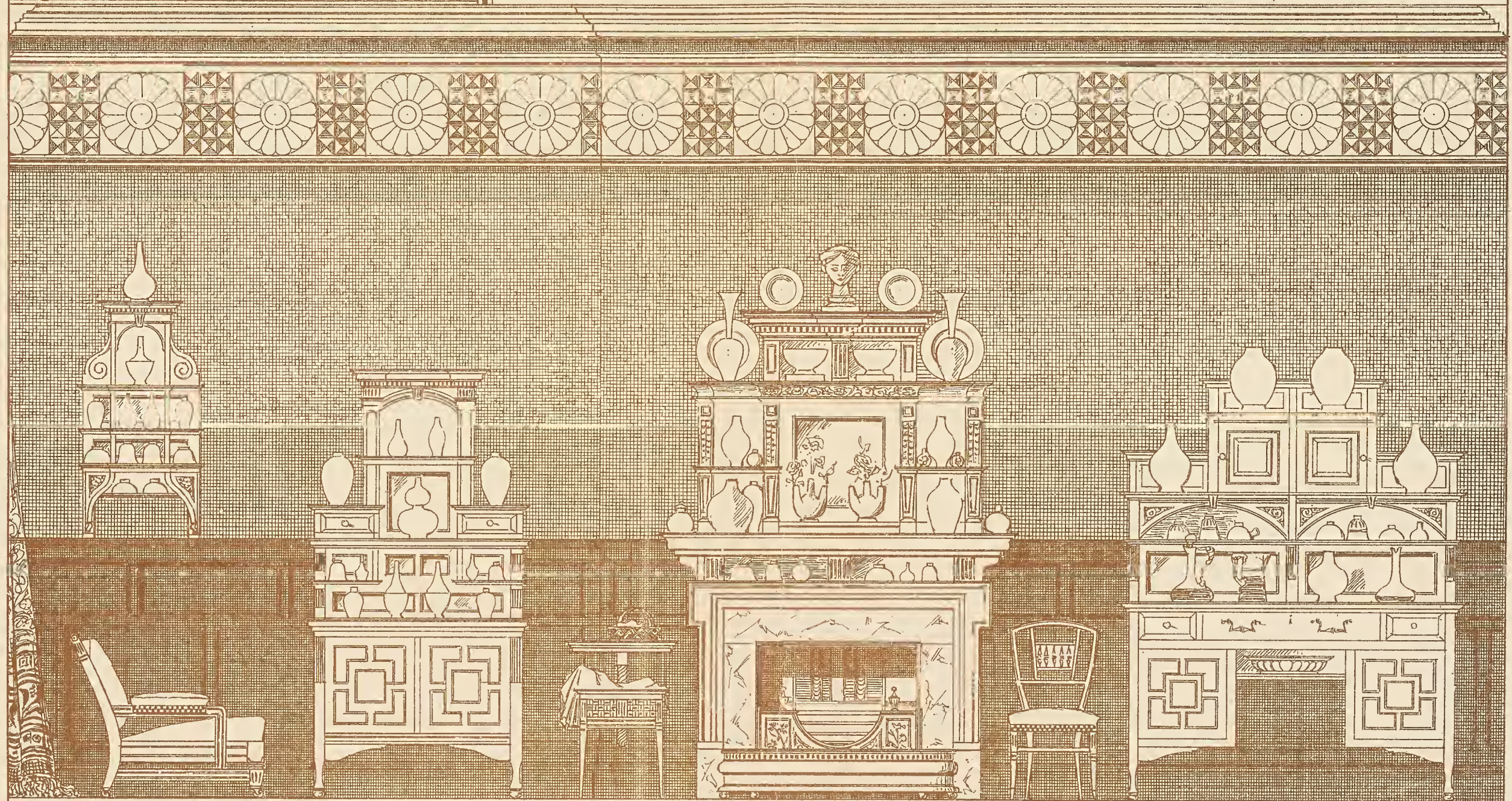


ART FURNITURE
 DESIGNED BY EDWARD
 W. GODWIN F.S.A.
 AND MANUFACTURED BY
 WILLIAM WATT
 21 GRAFTON STREET
 GOWER STREET LONDON



D31

Jacobean Furniture



ART FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
21, GRAFTON STREET, GOWER STREET, LONDON.

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1877
CHMRB

PREFACE.

I HAVE received a letter from Mr. E. W. GODWIN, F.S.A., which I have liberty to print, and therefore I venture to use it as a preface to this little work.

WM. WATT.

To Mr. Watt.

DEAR SIR,

I AM in receipt of your letter announcing your intention to prepare and publish, a catalogue of your manufactures in furniture and decoration. I think it is quite time that something of the sort should be issued, so that the public may the better know what you have done, are doing, and propose to do.

Personally from an art point of view I am glad to hear of your proposal, as it may lead intending purchasers to come to you direct for things that I have designed for you, and which have fortunately secured such attention as to be copied by others in the trade; but have unfortunately been travestied, even caricatured, in the process. A marked example of this is the square coffee table you first made for me, nine or ten years ago. The lines and dimensions of the different parts of what seems to be a very simple bit of furniture constitute its beauty and its art—if it has any. But I have seen the lines changed, the proportions altered, until that which I had regarded as a beauty became to me

an offence and an eyesore. I should not have alluded to this but for the large sale the table in question commands, and but for the fact of my meeting it almost wherever I go,—in private houses, in show-rooms, in pictures, and in books, very prominently in the frontispiece of Miss Garrett's "Suggestions for House Decoration" (Macmillan's "Art at Home" Series).

I do not know how it is with others, I speak only of myself when I say, that the commonest article of furniture—a chair or a table—cannot be an artistic work by any happy-go-lucky process whatsoever. Little things of this kind to be artistic imperatively demand no inconsiderable amount of thought, and much careful full-size drawing, sometimes done over and over again. But the labour of designing such things is so wholly disproportioned to the reward, that artists have but little external encouragement to devote their time to this class of work.

You are probably aware that in the middle of the fourteenth century a society of artists flourished at Florence, and that among the members were found "Decorative Artists," working in wood and metal. You will remember that the Institute of Painters at Venice included casket-makers, gilders, and varnishers. At the very dawn, too, of the Renaissance, we find that Dello, a Florentine painter of note, was not content to wait idly or dreamily for commissions to paint easel pictures. On the contrary, it is recorded of him, that he filled up the whole of his time for some years in painting and decorating furniture, seats, beds, caskets, &c. His work was not only well done, but the well-doing was much appreciated, and so, says Vasari, he amassed a considerable fortune. It is somewhat different now-a-days, the well-doing is evidently of small account, as any one may see who will take the trouble to do so. Look at the worse than childish paintings on the panels of modern furniture. Why is it so? Because the appreciation that Dello enjoyed

is not forthcoming. The majority of the few rich and cultured people who could appreciate, hardly ever look at new furniture, their way of encouraging contemporary artists who devise works in wood and metal, being shown in patronising the curiosity monger. This fashion of seeking in curiosity shops for mobilia, whether of carved work, of marquetry, or what not, is most pernicious to the development of what national art-power there may yet be latent among us. That artists should by example give currency to this fashion is to be deplored; but still more is it to be deprecated that the cabinet-maker should have given them cause by neglecting or discouraging the artistic element in his work.

No doubt you will continue to do everything in your power to counteract this discouragement by producing furniture of refined design, of good workmanship, of reasonable cost; and that you will issue this Catalogue rather as an earnest of good things to come than as an exhibition of a work accomplished; in the which hope

I remain, faithfully yours,

E. W. GODWIN.

London, January 1st, 1877.

A FEW HINTS ON DOMESTIC FURNITURE AND DECORATING.

BY WILLIAM WATT.

IN looking attentively at the Domestic Art Manufactures of the present day, we cannot fail to be conscious of an awakening of the spirit of the beautiful among us in our every-day life. The art revival of modern days which at first was confined to the Church or the wealthy few is now unquestionably extending like a tidal wave over the whole land, and the demand for artistic work in every manufacture is daily growing larger and larger, thanks to such pioneers, artists, writers, and administrators as A. W. Pugin, G. G. Scott, Viollet-le-Duc, Cole, Morris, Street, Shaw, Bodley, E. W. Godwin, Burges, Nesfield, their friends and followers.

To the few artists who years ago recognised the beauty of Japanese work, and who encouraged its importation, to the Kensington Museum Art Schools, and to the Royal School of Art Needlework, we are also indebted for no little influence in the right direction. Although no very great artistic work has been accomplished by us, although no genius has arisen to mark the age, and no very large measure of encouragement has been granted, there has been an extension of art among the general public, a diffusion of artistic feeling in this country within the last few years beyond expectation; sure signs of the oncoming of a condition of things when England may hope for such a measure of grace and beauty in all her work as may be equivalent, perhaps more than equivalent, to what is popularly called genius.

To build a house and furnish it demands more care and time than is generally supposed. We are told that when the wisest of kings had determined to build a

temple and palace he took care to seek out one who was experienced, or as the Old English text has it, "cunning." This director of works was a man "filled with wisdom and understanding." Cunning among even the skilled of the Tyrians to work or devise works in gold and in silver and in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, as also in the designing of textile fabrics, in graving or sculpture, —in short, a man skilled "to find out every device which" should be put to him, and the description of the work clearly shows that every useful feature was clothed with beautiful design of conventional ornament, flower, fruit, and figure.

Founded on such an experience as this, the same king tells us that "through wisdom is a house builded, and by understanding it is established, and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches." This may be of course symbolical of the human being, but it is as true of the symbol as of the thing symbolised.

The few hints we have to offer on Domestic Art will be extremely brief, for in this, as in every other branch of art, by the work itself, and not our words, must we be judged.

A house to be a comfort and a pleasure must possess two things—good light, and plenty of fresh air. A certain writer says "that if a small portion of the air in an ordinary sitting-room were submitted to the microscope, we should find it loaded with minute fragments of hair, wool, soot, dust, dirt, and other refuse; chemically it would be charged with impurities—sulphuretted and carburetted hydrogen principally, with various oxides of carbon—and on the other hand deficient in oxygen, and that more active and precious form of oxygen known to chemists as ozone; while lastly, it would be heated beyond the average temperature out of doors and devoid of that motion which makes the open air so refreshing. In this respect, indeed, the open air is like the open sea. The sea is always fresh,

because it is in perpetual motion. The open air, whatever may be its actual temperature as shown by the thermometer, is for the same reason always fresh, pleasant, and invigorating."

As, however, the plan and design of a house are properly within the province of an architect, we will not here attempt to show how good light and air can best be secured, or how rooms, halls, passages, &c., can best be arranged. Apart from the question of encroaching on the rights of a profession, the subject, is far too large to be tied up in this little bundle of suggestions. Of one thing we may be sure, that no good decoration, no happy arrangement of furniture, can ever be achieved in ordinary houses where architectural features are extensively used, and much multiplied.

To furnish a home, four things should be considered, economy, utility, fitness or suitability, and beauty. We have no set rules for furnishing a home, for every man's house should not only be to him a castle for security, but a field for the display of individual taste and through it of individual character.

In giving these hints and suggestions we are well aware that the few designs of furniture and decorations here illustrated are not by any means perfect; but they are examples of what we mean. The form is only one thing connected with furnishing, and however important it is to have correct form, it is equally important and far more difficult to get correct colour. If we but look to nature as our guide here we shall do well. Take, for instance, the sky, at sunrise or sunset, and study it for a few moments. We find no utility in it, but the blindest among us find some enjoyment, and to those who with keen sympathy notice it, how profound is that enjoyment! But when we turn to our homes, and see in house after house nothing, for example, but a constantly recurring chalky-white ceiling, we may well think

that in vain "day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."

THE HALL.

Entering our home, the first impression we get of it is derived from the appearance of the hall and staircase. Whether it is a mansion or cottage the entrance or hall first attracts attention, and from it may often be gathered the style of the whole house and the artistic character of its inmates. If we find in the hall either quaintness or grace, one or other will be found developed upon further acquaintance with the house.

The walls of the hall should be of a warm or cool tint, according to the aspect; the floor should be of Mosaic work, either fine work, like that called "opus Alexandrinum," or common Mosaic, or inlaid slabs of marble.

The furniture should be of a substantial character and made of oak or teak, designed and arranged so as to avoid anything like a crowded appearance. If the hall and landings are spacious, marble busts and statues may be placed in suitable positions with very good effect; but the pedestal though reasonably plain ought to be something more than a piece of a column or a boundary post. The carpet on the stairs being exposed to much observation and wear, should be selected from the most durable in the market and free from violent contrasts, such as white on dark red, or lemon on dark blue.

DINING ROOM.

While we agree with those who uphold the English tradition that the dining room should be substantially furnished, we are not satisfied with the usual practice of making the dining room as heavy and dark as possible, and by stocking it with carved chairs, sideboards, and tables. We would suggest, not only for dining rooms but for most

rooms, the use of polished oak floors, or at least a margin of two feet of polished floor against the walls. Thin parquet is now so made that it can easily be laid on ordinary deal floors with little trouble or cost. The grate or stove is always one of the leading features of a room; it should have as little iron as possible, and should be chiefly constructed of clay, terra-cotta, or tiles. The dining room floor should have a rich carpet or a few large rugs. The walls should be broken by a dado, three feet or more from skirting, or even to the height of two-thirds of the wall, according to one's taste, and the paperhangings or decorations should gradually get lighter in tone towards the ceiling. This last-mentioned feature should be decorated with either raised plaster-work or paintings, or, if the cost of these is too great, papers can be used of patterns like those specially designed for ceilings (Plate 9). Gold leaf should be used in mass and well distributed, as in the Alhambra Court, or not at all. At the Crystal Palace, we have been taught for many years how beautiful such a feature as the ceiling may become, no matter whether Egyptian, Greek, Byzantine, Moorish, or Renaissance.

The furniture should be of one colour, but may be in two or more tones of the particular colour selected. In some cases, the sideboard may be adapted to the architecture of the room, and be built up as a fixture to balance the mantel-piece. All glitter of French polish or varnish should be avoided: if reflections are desired, let them be secured by polished metal or silvered glass.

The window-hangings and *portières* might be made of some soft and thick material, and should either hang from a plain and small brass rod, only just touching the floor, or from a rod within a square cut vallance, as in Plate 7. We much prefer the soft light of lamps or candles to the usual large chandelier hung high up, which illuminates chiefly the ceiling.

THE LIBRARY.

The Library ought to be furnished and fitted with the fixed intention to secure for this room as quiet and reposeful effect as is compatible with a full light, but carefully exclude all strong sunlight. Book-cases should be arranged so that the light may enable one at all times readily to read the title of every book in its place. The top shelf of a book-case should, if possible, always be within reach, that is to say the under side of the cornice or covering shelf should not be *more* than 7 feet from the floor.

One of the library tables should have a moveable top with rack, as large folios require tilting up before we can read them comfortably. Large atlas works may be arranged in an atlas stand on large castors so as to be easily moved. Plate glass doors to book-cases are a mistake, as nothing looks so out of place behind glass as books do. Have a large table about the middle of the room which you can load with folios if necessary, or upon which you can place a stand for reference books, and have comfortable chairs and shaded lamps, with a thick *portière* over the door to deaden the sounds of the house.

DRAWING ROOM.

While a certain preciseness is to be desired in furnishing a dining room, the drawing room admits of considerable freedom of arrangement. Here, things that can lay claim to grace, elegance, and lightness, should find themselves *at home*, and not, as is too often the case, "placed."

The decorations may range from the very darkest to the very lightest key of colour, but it may be taken as a tolerably safe rule that the contrast between walls and furniture, should not be strongly marked.

The carpet or rugs should be selected with due regard

to the general scheme of the decorations. Warm colours on the walls may require reducing by patches of warmer colour in rugs, or masses of green or blue in carpets. The best plain Indian matting warmed up by a few choice Persian, or Indian rugs, has always a pleasant refined look if the furniture is not too dark. Although some of the cheap black furniture of the present day has a tendency to throw over this class of work a certain discredit, yet there are kinds of decorations not unworthy attention, with which ebonised furniture will be found suitable. Do not have too much furniture, but let each article be complete in itself, and necessary to the harmony of all the rest. The gas of the present day is very injurious to fine decorated furniture.

BEDROOMS.

Seeing that we pass one-third of our lives in our bedrooms, it is surely necessary that we should have them as healthy and cheerful as possible. Here we would strongly recommend polished floors, that the rugs might be taken up continually and cleaned. The ceiling and the upper part of the walls should be distempered in some plain light colour, so as to be easily renewed. The furniture should be as light in construction as is consistent with the strength required, and made of light wood. Hungarian ash furniture, oak and satin wood are very suitable, or even American ash looks well and is much cheaper. Wherever possible it is much to be desired on the score of health, that furniture should always be made in such a manner as to be easily moved. It might well be raised clear of the floor, so as to avoid anything like dust-traps. For the same reason flat-topped articles, as wardrobes, should be kept as low as practicable, that servants' labour may be saved and the chance of dust accumulation reduced. I have endeavoured to produce furniture with especial regard to this important

consideration, for it is a double problem of daily increasing difficulty, how to minimise the labour of domestic servants and secure that cleanliness which is so essential to perfect health.

ON GLAZING.

Much may be done to relieve the dull and depressing out-look of most of our London windows, by the judicious use of glass leaded up in patterns or set in fine woodwork of geometric design. Colour and painted subjects may be introduced, but much caution is required to be used, for it is quite possible that the opposite side of the way may spoil the colour, and almost obliterate the effect of the finer lines in the painted work.

Where it is not wished to incur the expense of new sashes, leaded glazing can be fixed against the existing glass, either of sash or French casement, at a small cost. But fine mahogany framing, hinged like folding shutters, is a better plan if it can be afforded, as it has certain practical advantages not possessed by the ordinary leaded up work, is capable of more artistic treatment, and is certainly more comfortable and domestic-looking.

PAPERHANGINGS.

The paperhangings should be selected with the greatest care and should be lively and cheerful. Where expense is no object we would recommend decorated or painted walls, but knowing from experience the cheapness and convenience of paperhanging, we have made it a special study to remedy its bad effects as much as possible. With that view we have had special designs and colourings made, of which we respectfully solicit an inspection.

In conclusion, I have every confidence in saying to those of my readers who may favour me with their orders, that

they may rely on every work being made with the greatest care, as regards design, material, and execution; and while sincerely thanking my friends and the public for the patronage I have received, I am encouraged to hope for a continuance and extension of their support, as from the enlargement of my premises, I am able to enter more fully into every department of furnishing and decorating than heretofore. It is in compliance with numerous requests, that I have put together these few hints to accompany my catalogue. For the help which I have received from those whose designs, many of which are registered, are here illustrated, I return my best thanks and can only trust they will be useful to the public.

WM. WATT.

21, Grafton Street East,
Gower Street, London.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

PLATE 1.

The Frontispiece. A rough sketch of an interior of a hall and staircase. The whole motif of which has been derived (it is scarcely necessary to say) from Japanese illustrations.

PLATE 2.

Six different kinds of chairs, a folding screen, a hat stand, a music stool and a pattern for a dado decoration.

The middle chair on the top of the plate is designed as a smoker's chair, with moveable seat and drawers beneath for pipes and tobacco.

The hall furniture is derived from "Old English" examples of woodwork.

PLATE 3.

Two couches, two chairs and a buffet.

The buffet is an example of an inexpensive and roomy sideboard, but is capable of enrichment to suit a costlier style of furnishing. The arm chair, although extremely light in appearance, and in fact, is yet rendered more than usually strong by carrying the support of the arms down to the lower rails, thus obtaining for what is commonly the weakest part of an arm chair two points of support and attachment, instead of one.

PLATE 4.

A buffet, a hanging cabinet and a mantel-piece.

The buffet is specially designed for the convenience of bachelors or students who have little space to spare for furniture. It combines with the ordinary accommodation

of a sideboard, compartments for books, pamphlets, &c., enclosed by a curtain, drawers for prints, photographs and papers, and might be found serviceable in studios where the house accommodation is of the most limited nature.

PLATE 5.

Two sideboards, a dining room chair and a hanging bookcase.

PLATE 6.

A buffet, a mantel-piece, two chairs and a hanging bookcase.

This buffet as here shown was originally made for Mr. Godwin in black and gold, with a curtain of gold embroidery on yellow satin. It has also been made with a door in the place of a curtain. The projecting ends are hinged so as to turn down when required.

The mantel-piece is made with a special view to the display of china.

The easy chair has been designed so as to render the seat moveable, an arrangement that practically precludes the accumulation of dust, pencils, rings, &c., in the crevice at the back of the seat.

PLATE 7.

An interior of a dining room with polished oak floor, in the old English style. The articles here shown are decorated with mouldings and carving in low relief. Here, as in most of the work made by me, it may be noted that there is ample space for the use of the housemaid's brush underneath the different pieces of furniture.

PLATE 8.

Anglo-Japanese drawing room furniture.

The feet of the music wagon, writing table, and coffee table are shod with brass.

PLATE 9.

Two examples of ceiling decorations.

These are printed for me in three or four colours, and it is necessarily impossible to give the effect in plain black and white illustrations.

PLATE 10.

A wall decoration and a ceiling decoration.

The peacock pattern for the wall has unfortunately been rendered extremely harsh by the black spots which in the original drawing are in colour, subordinated to that of the peacocks.

PLATE 11.

Interior of a library and library furniture.

The book cases, by a mistake of my draughtsman, have been carried up to a height far exceeding that recommended in my remarks at the beginning of the catalogue.

PLATE 12.

Drawing room furniture, piano and stool, cabinet, settee, table and flower stand.

The illustration of the piano is unfortunate, as it gives this design a heavy look, more like stone than woodwork. This, however, is not the case in reality.

The legs of the circular table are shod with brass, which at the same time gives stability and decoration.

PLATE 13.

Bed room furniture.

All these are more or less founded on Japanese principles. The large painted wardrobe is however of a more massive construction than that usual with me. The paintings in the panels may be after the manner of the Japanese or any other style or may be of plain or carved wood, the general form and arrangement of the panels being compatible with almost any style.

PLATE 14.

A drawing room.

The furniture and decoration throughout have been the result of a study of Japanese form adapted to modern English wants.

PLATE 15.

In the middle of this plate is shown the coffee table spoken of in the preface and an arm chair (derived from

an old English example) which completely harmonises with the table.

PLATE 16.

Economic furniture for sitting room and bedroom.

These are especially designed for single people living in small chambers. The Bedroom furniture is for a lady. A bachelor's wants are more limited, especially in wardrobes: the small one shown on Plate 13 would, for example, be usually enough for a gentleman whose means were limited.

PLATE 17.

Jacobean furniture.

This drawing shows a side elevation of a room with the fireplace. This title is rather a misnomer, the furniture shown being no more Jacobean than that shown on Plate 8 is Japanese. It is easy enough to make up furniture in *direct imitation* of any particular style, especially of the old

English styles, with such Museums as that at Kensington open to us. What I have endeavoured to secure in design has rather been a modern treatment of certain well-known and admired styles, than a mere reproduction of the old forms.

PLATE 18.

Stained glass blinds for plate glass windows.

Here, again, I have to acknowledge that my draughtsman has not done justice to the original designs, especially in the drawing of the medallion.

PLATE 19.

Design for stalls, &c., for choirs or private chapel.

From the late extension of my premises I am enabled to produce work of this description, as well as domestic cabinet work.

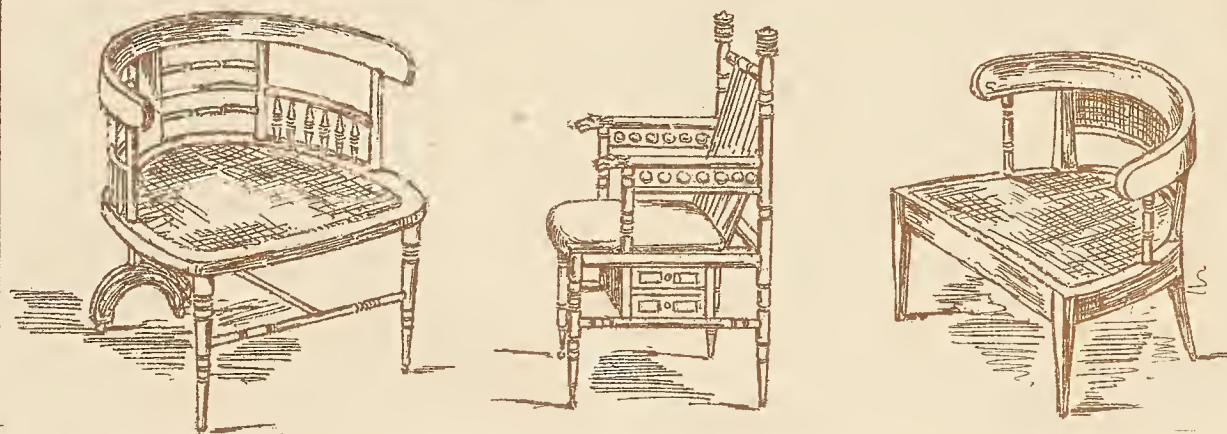
PLATE 20.

Wall paper decorations showing different dados.

A List of Prices of the Articles in the above Plates may be had free on application to

WM. WATT, 21, GRAFTON STREET, GOWER STREET, or B. T. BATSFORD, 52, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON.

LIBRARY OR STUDY ARM CHAIRS.



FOUR-LEAVED FOLDING SCREEN



FURNITURE & C
VARIOUS.

DAUC PATTERN

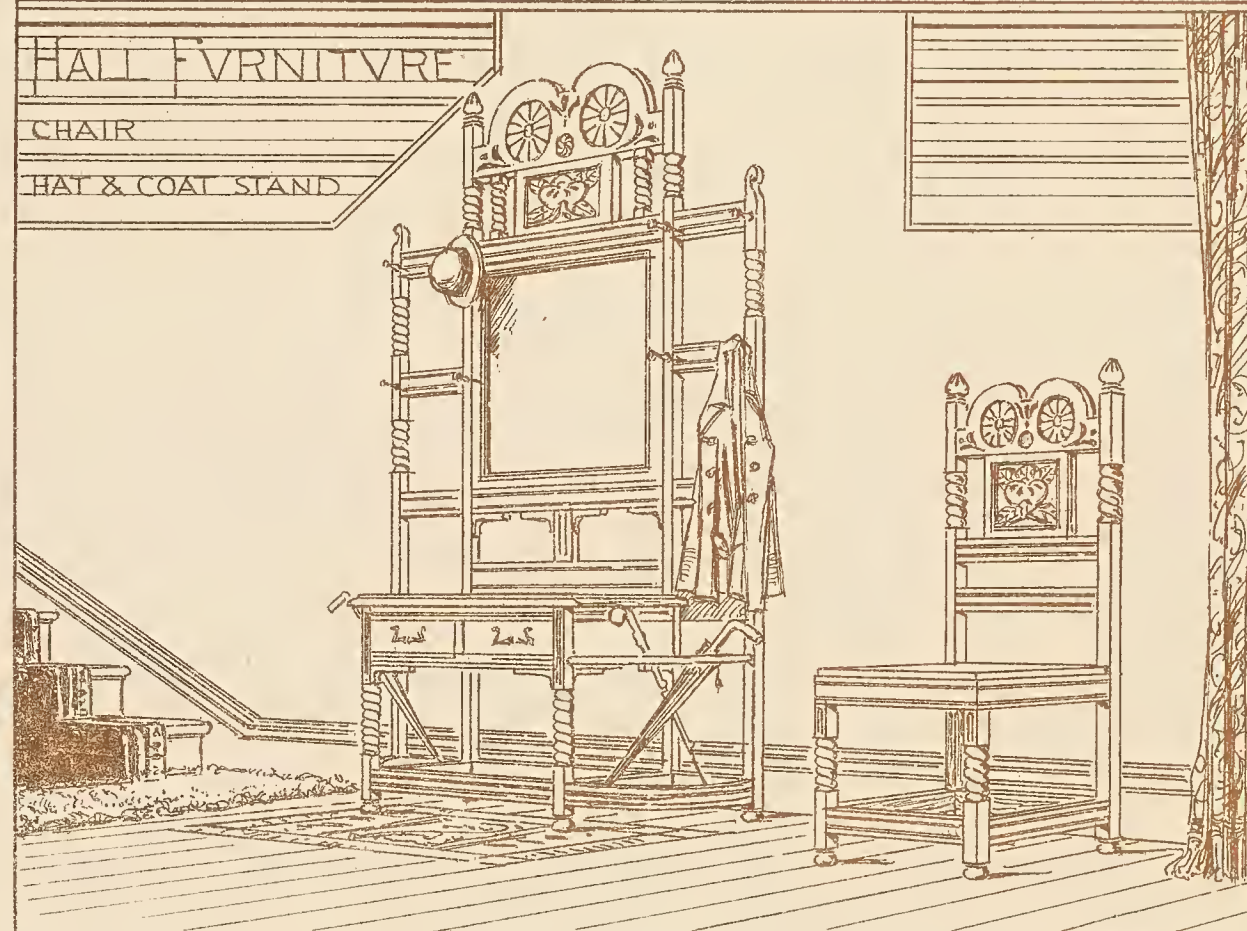
IN 3 COLORS



HALL FURNITURE

CHAIR

HAT & COAT STAND

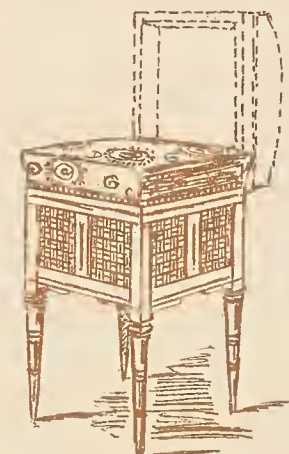


WICKER CHAIR

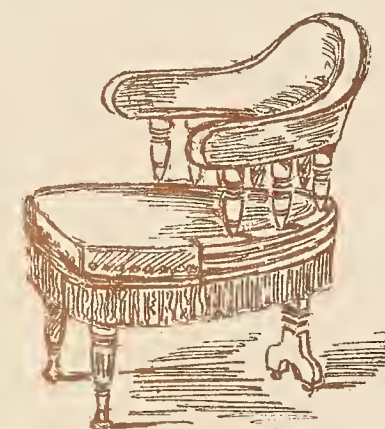


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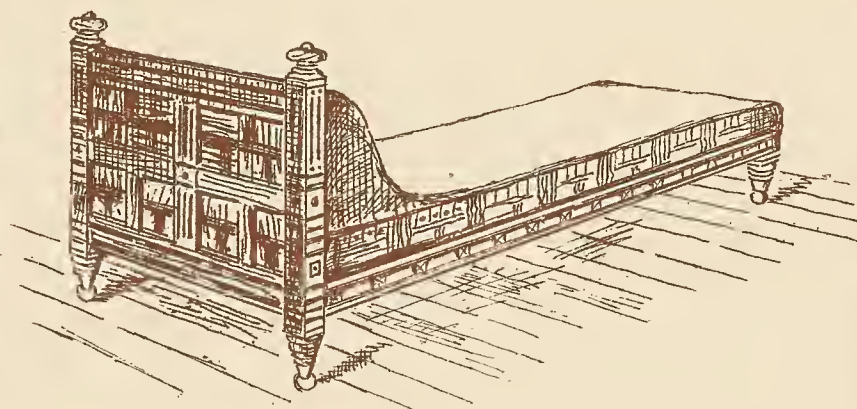
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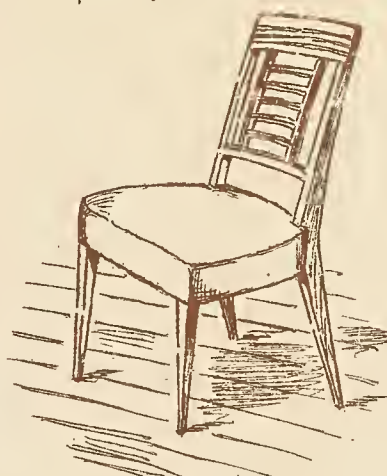
STUDY CHAIR



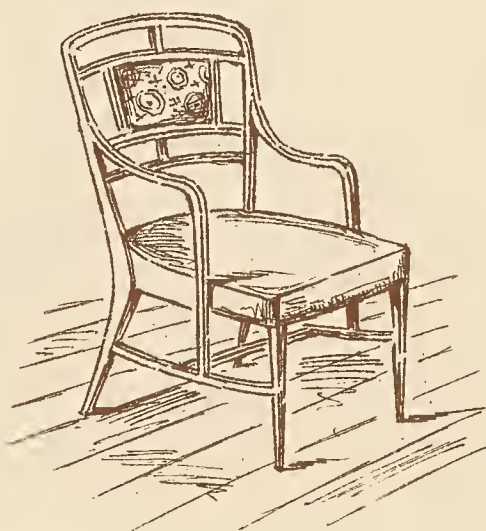
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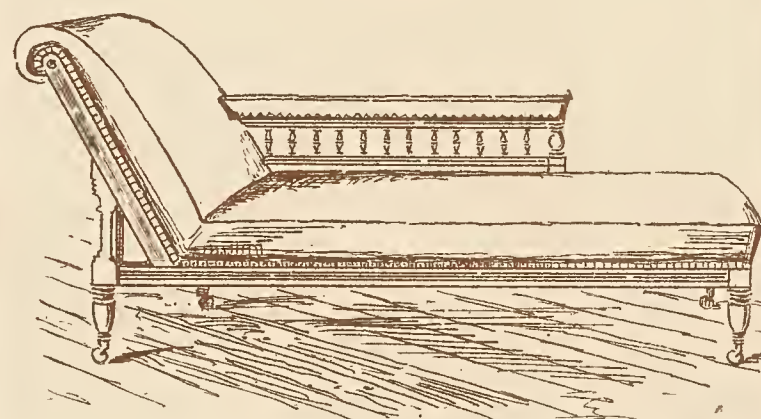
CHAIR



ARM CHAIR

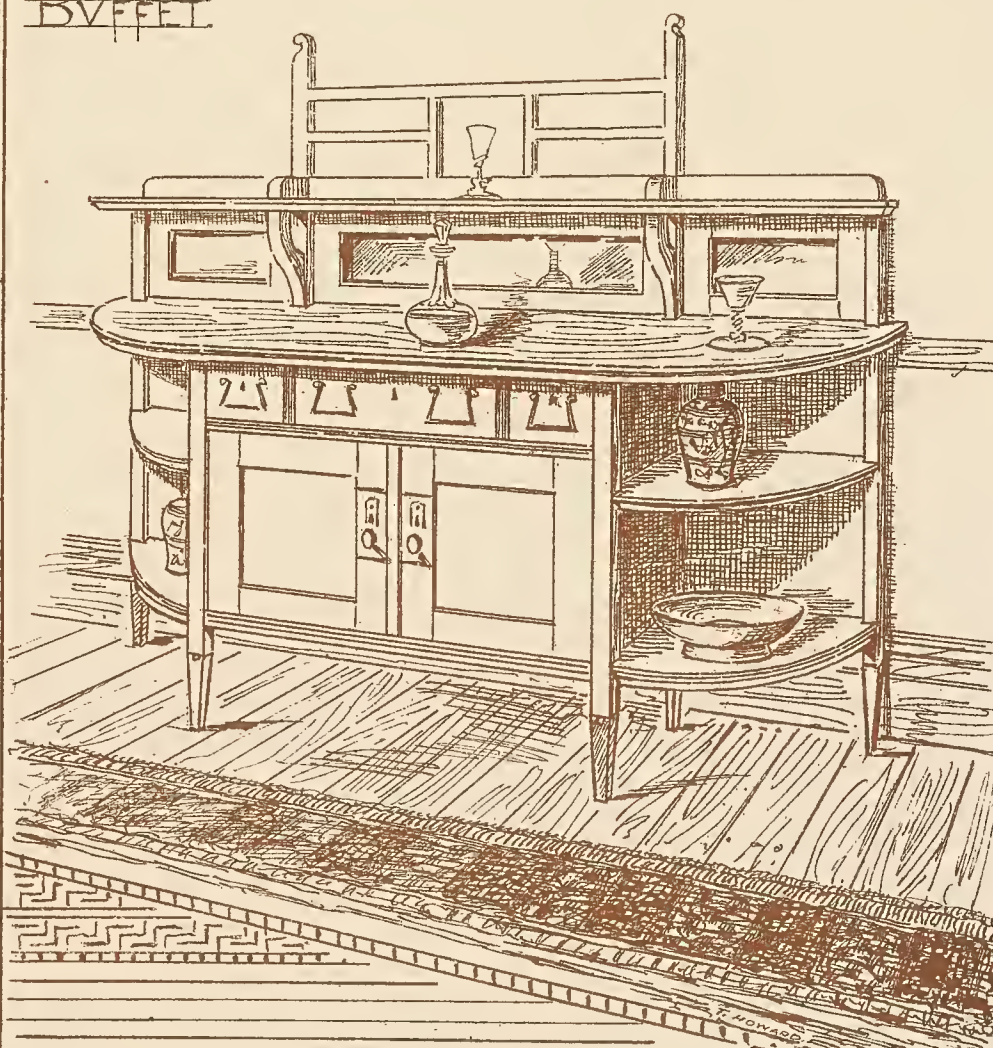


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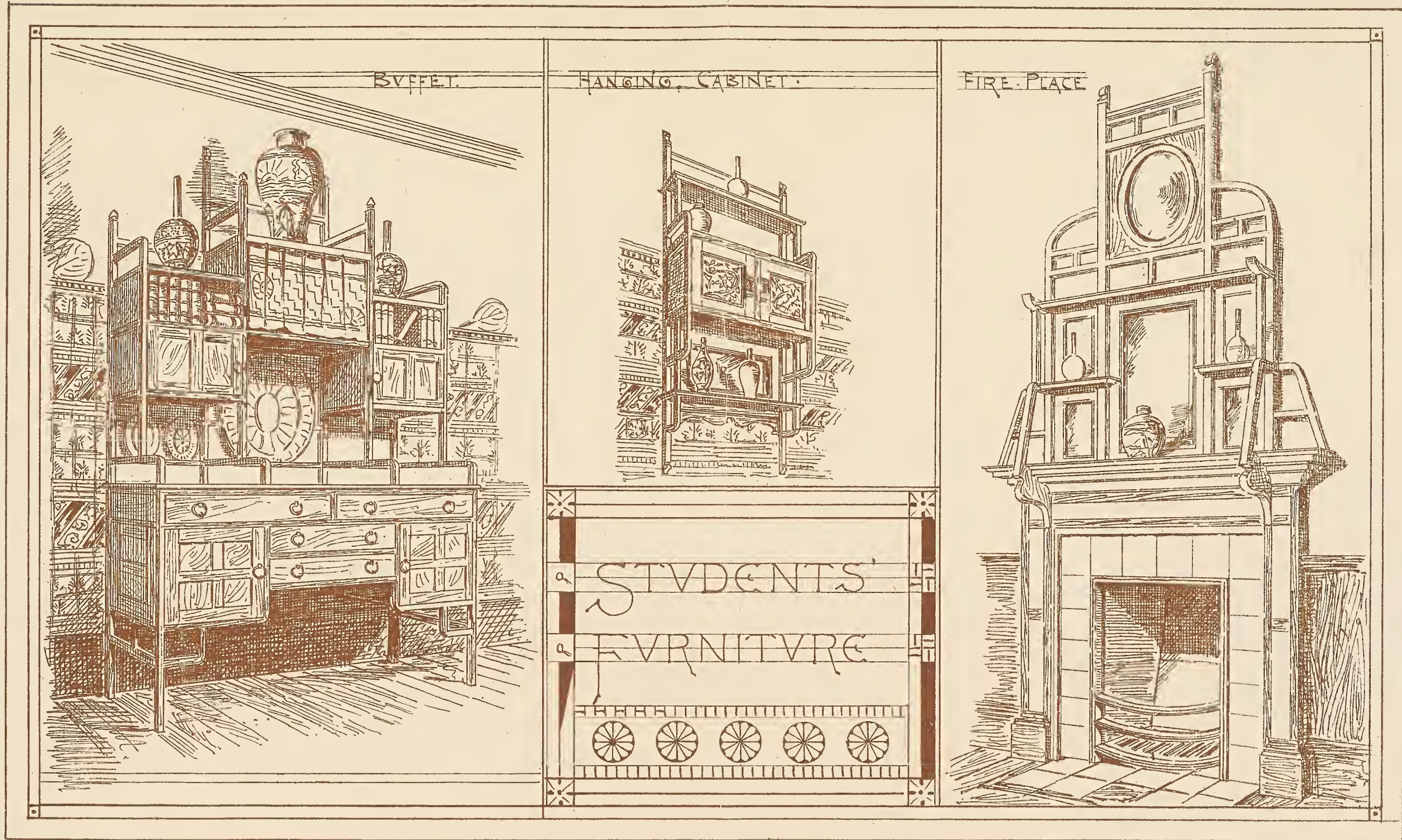


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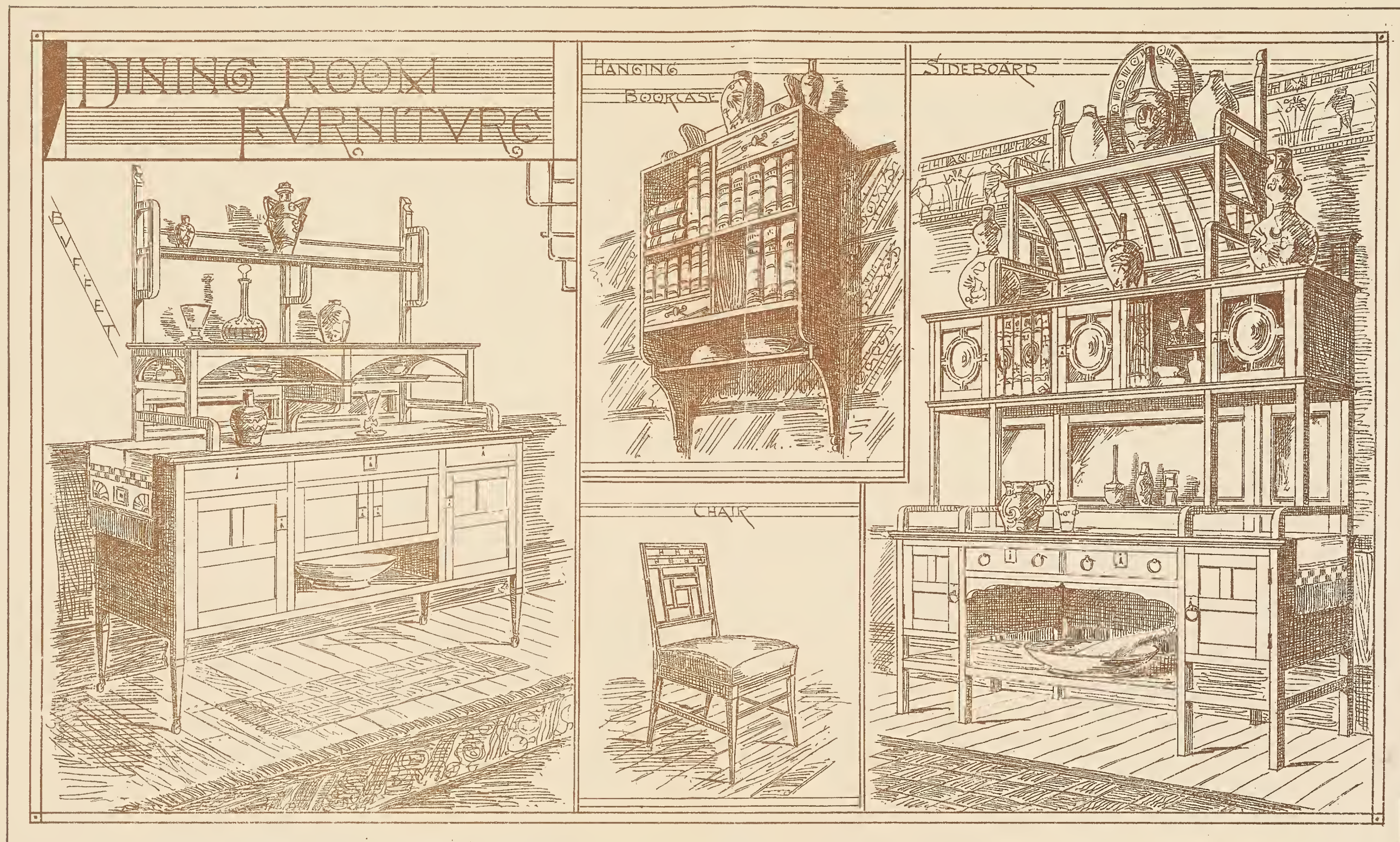
BUFFET



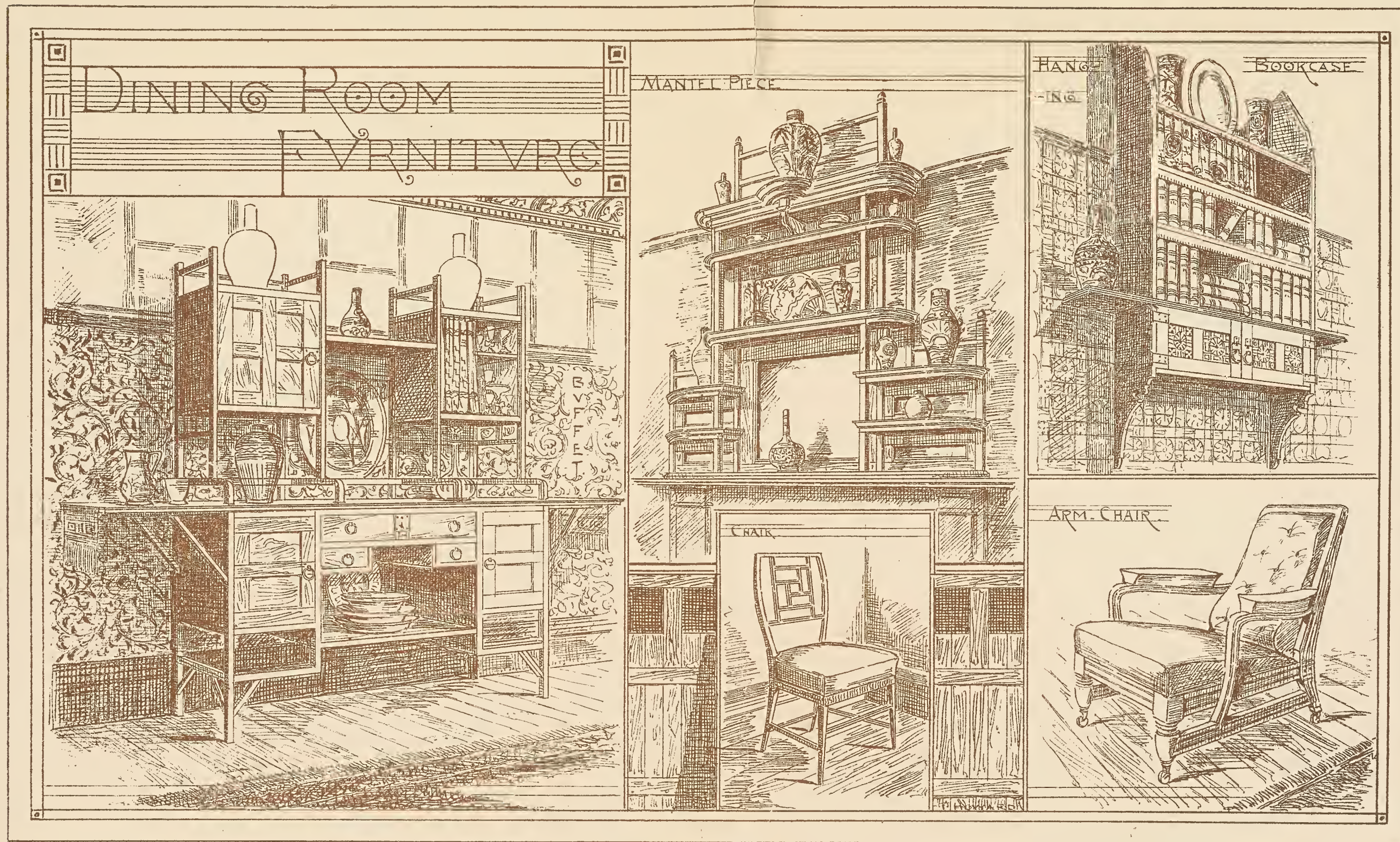
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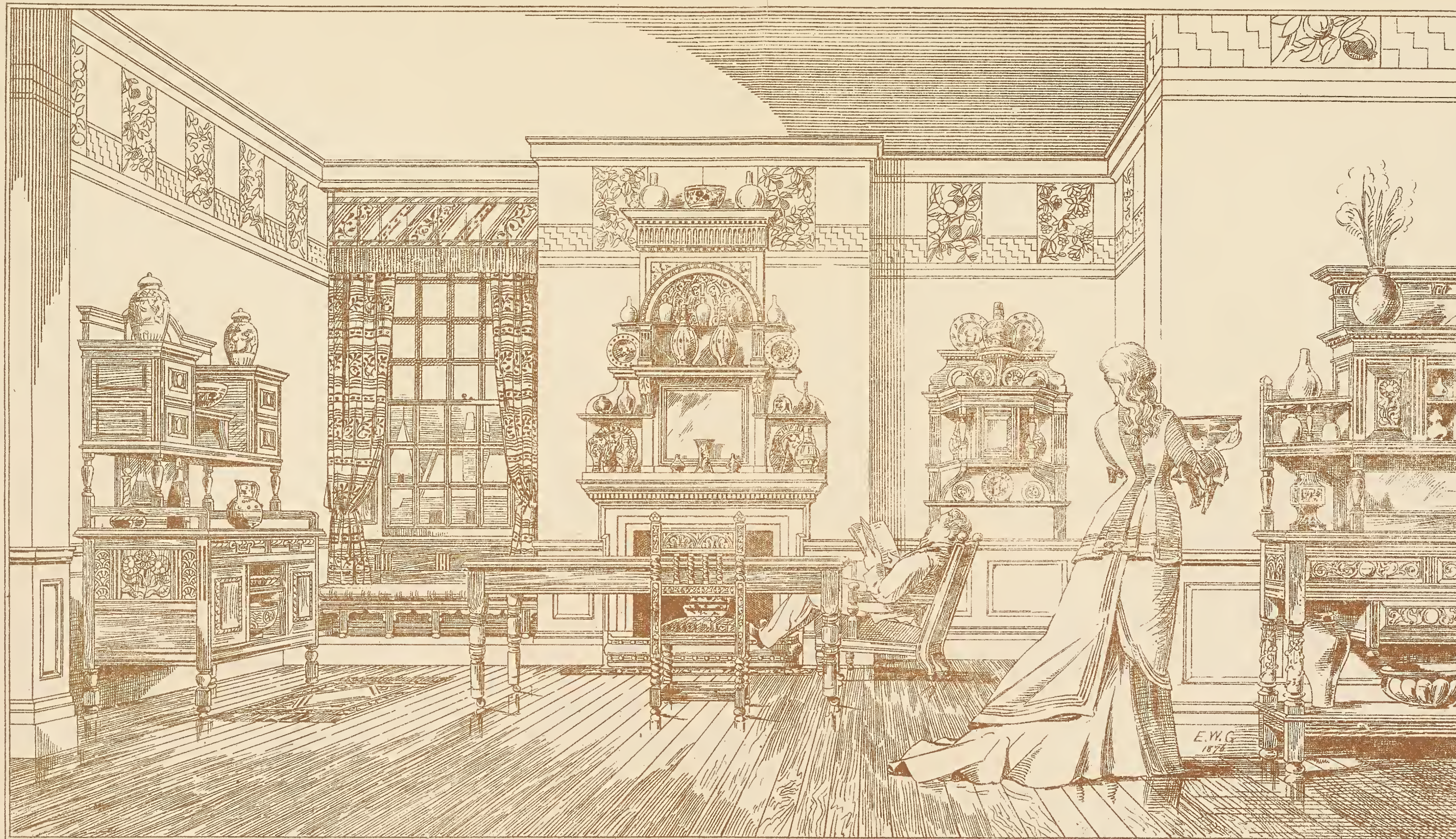
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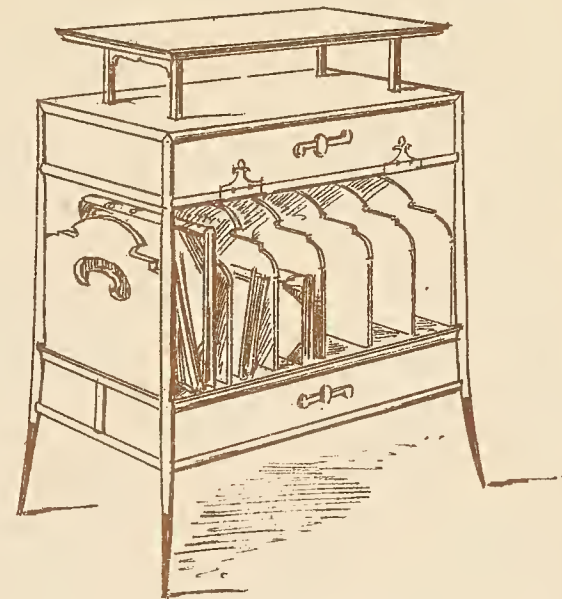


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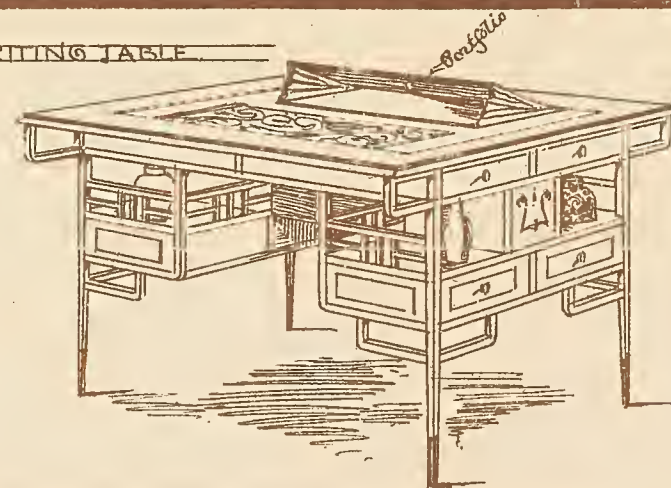
ART FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
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MUSIC WAGON



ANGLO-JAPANESE DRAWING ROOM FURNITURE

WRITING TABLE

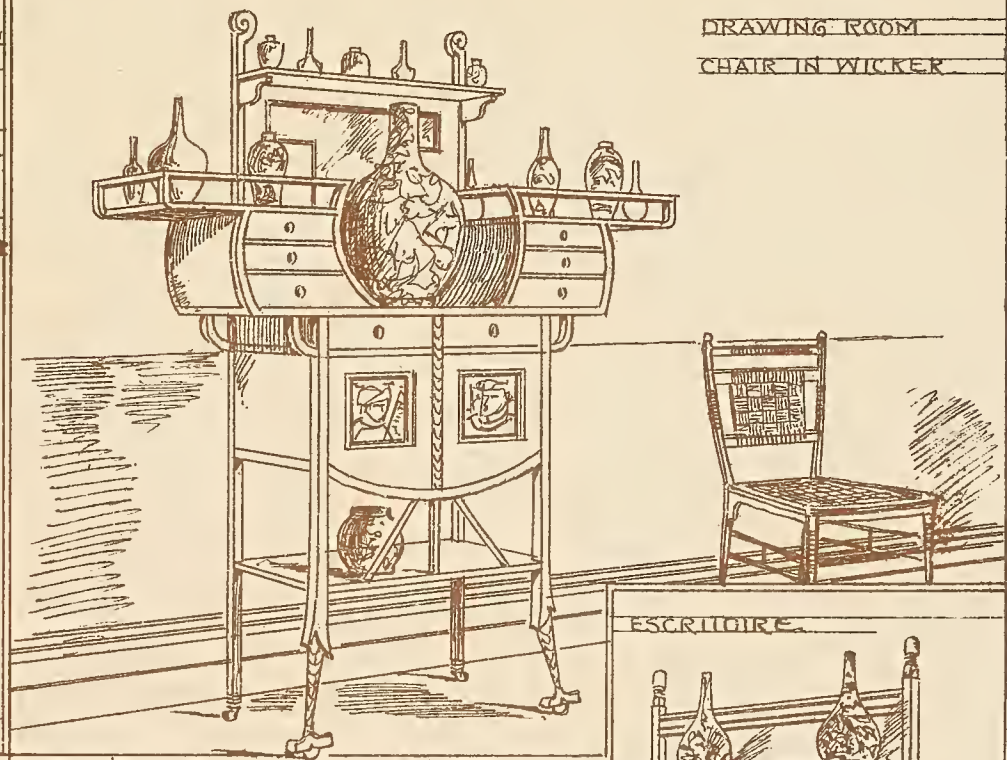


ANGLO-JAPANESE "WING" CABINET

PRICE

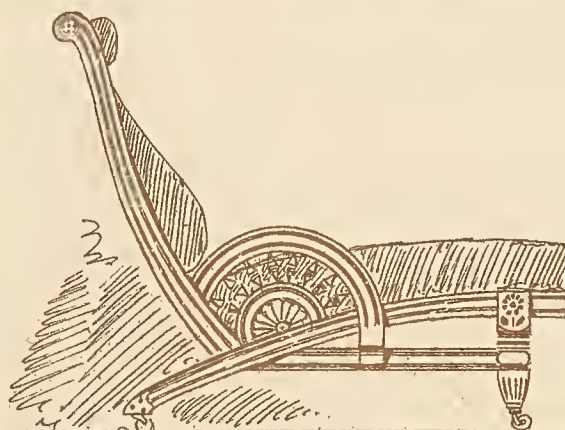
DRAWING ROOM

CHAIR IN WICKER

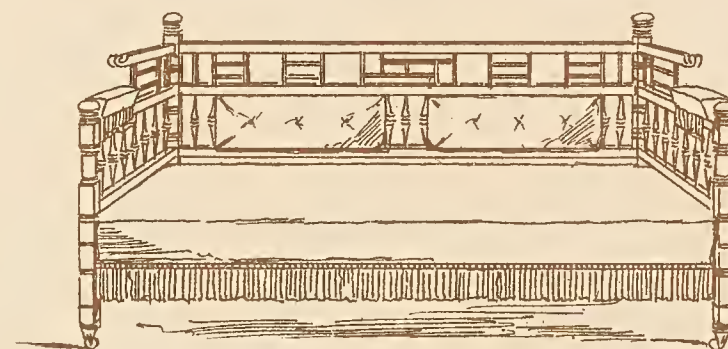


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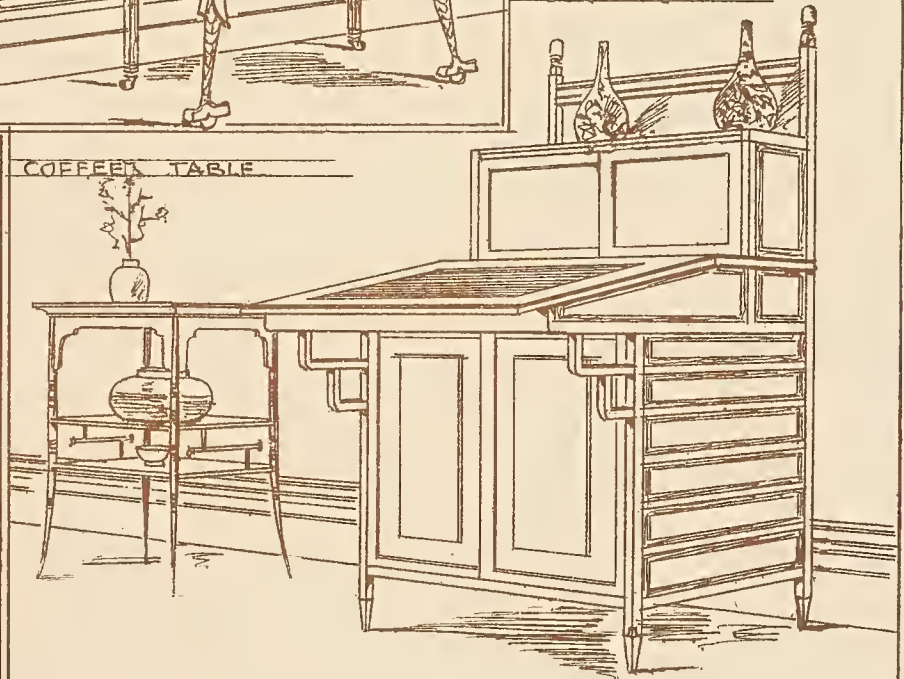
LADIES DRAWING ROOM EASY CHAIR

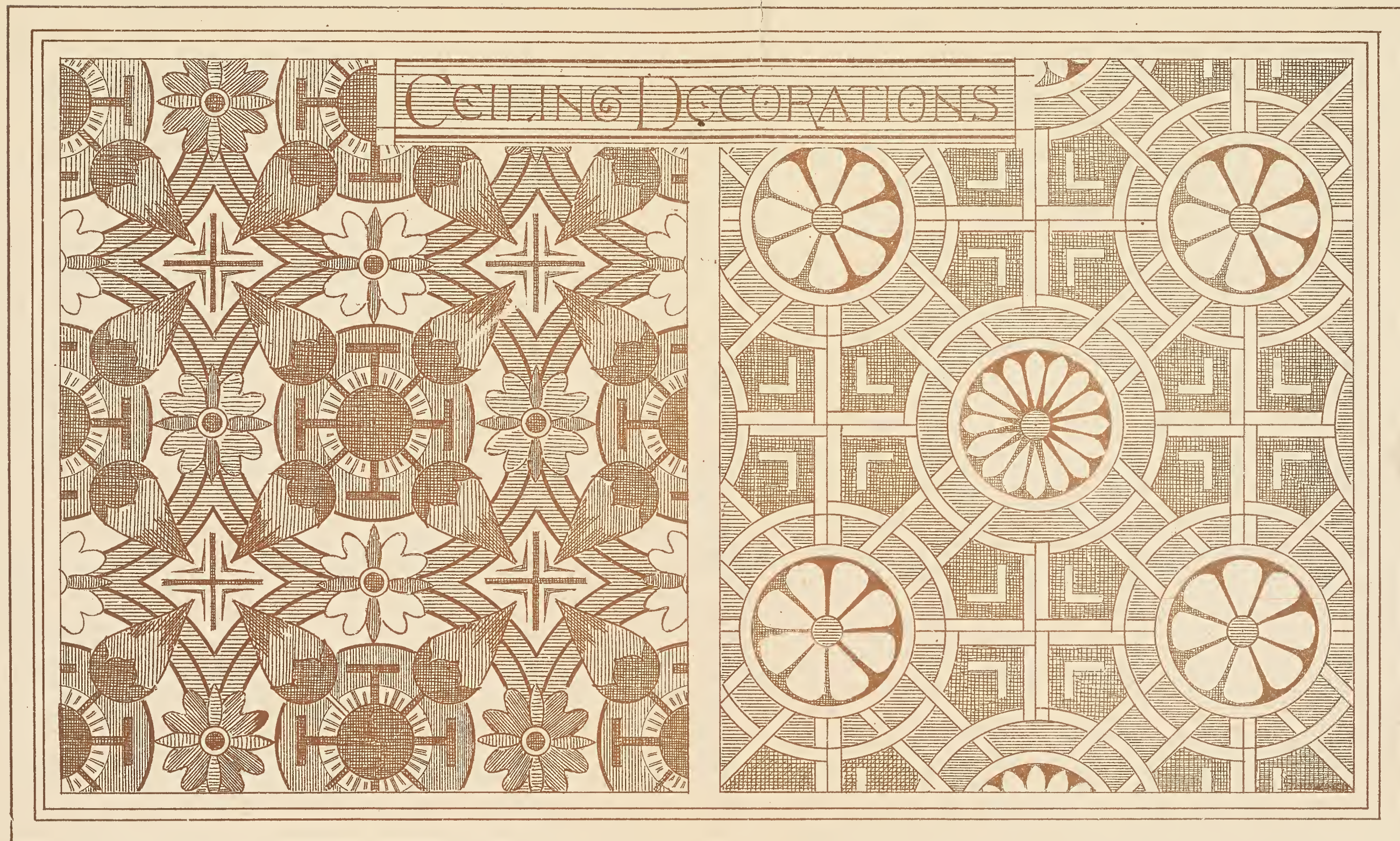


SOFA

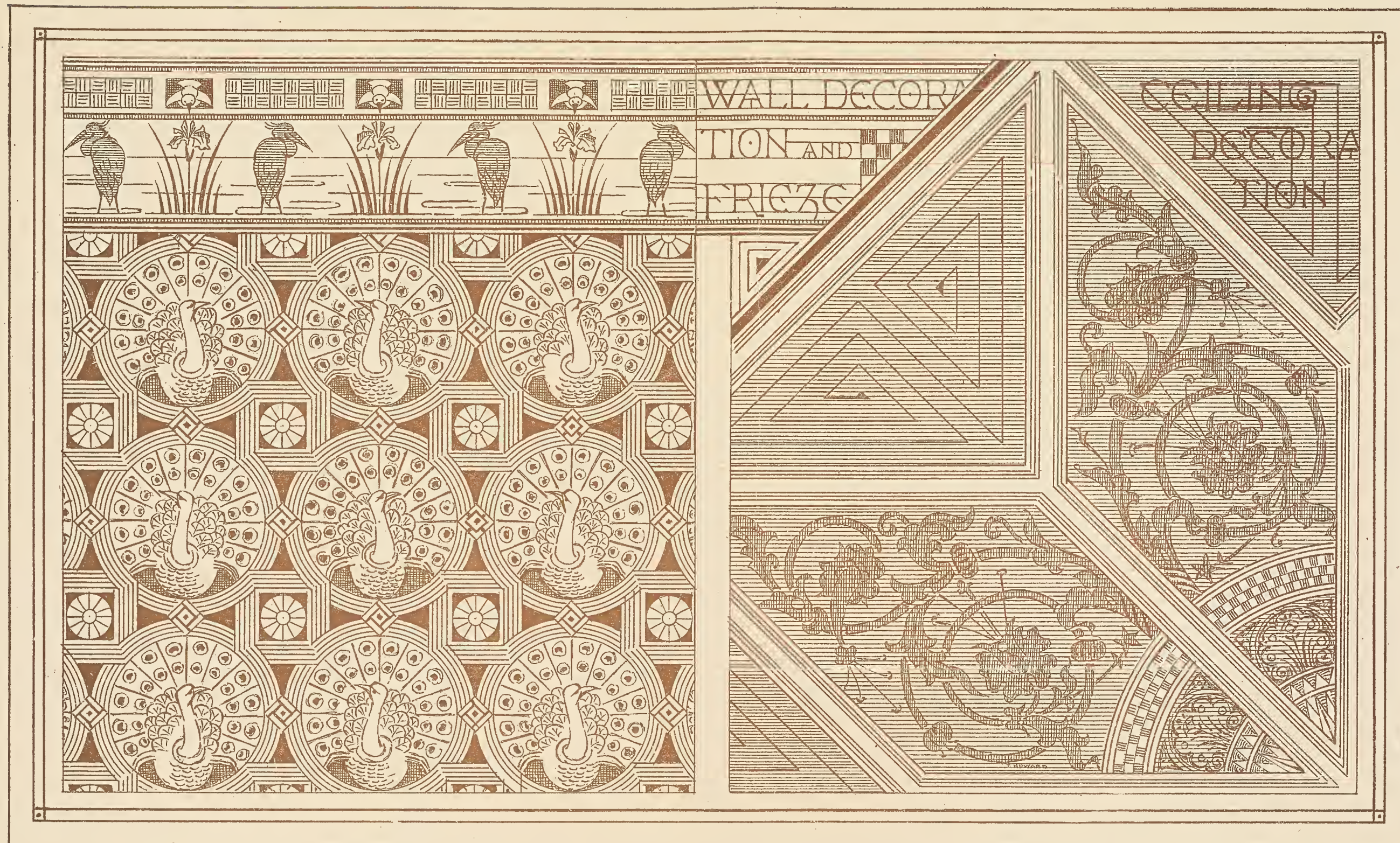


COFFEE TABLE





ART FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
21, GRAFTON STREET, GOWER STREET, LONDON.



ART FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
21, GRAFTON STREET, COWER STREET, LONDON.

LIBRARY
FURNITURE



CHAIR

FOOTSTOOL

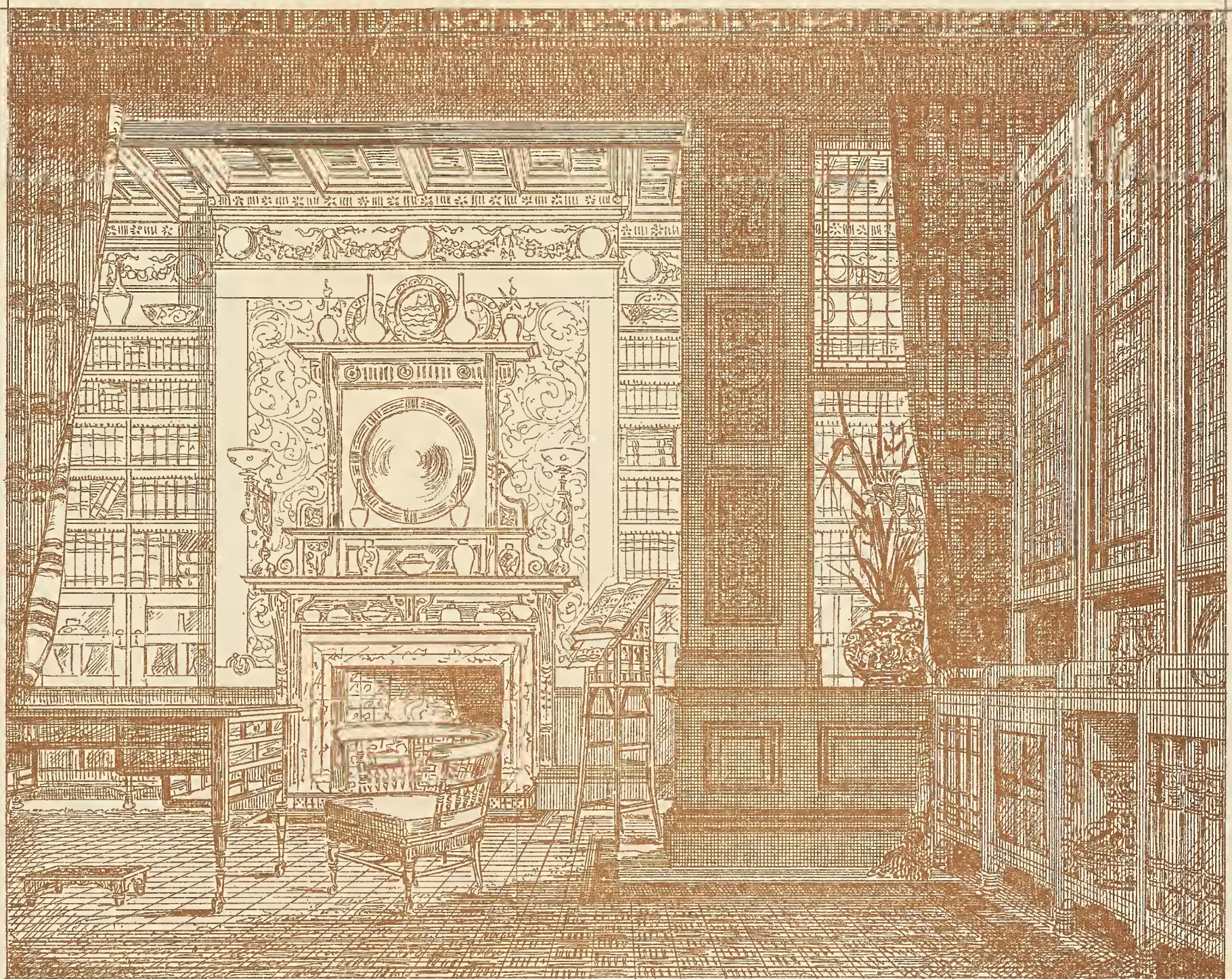
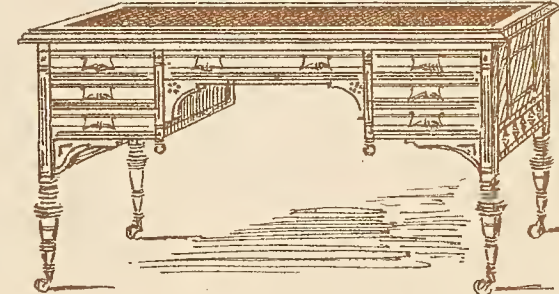


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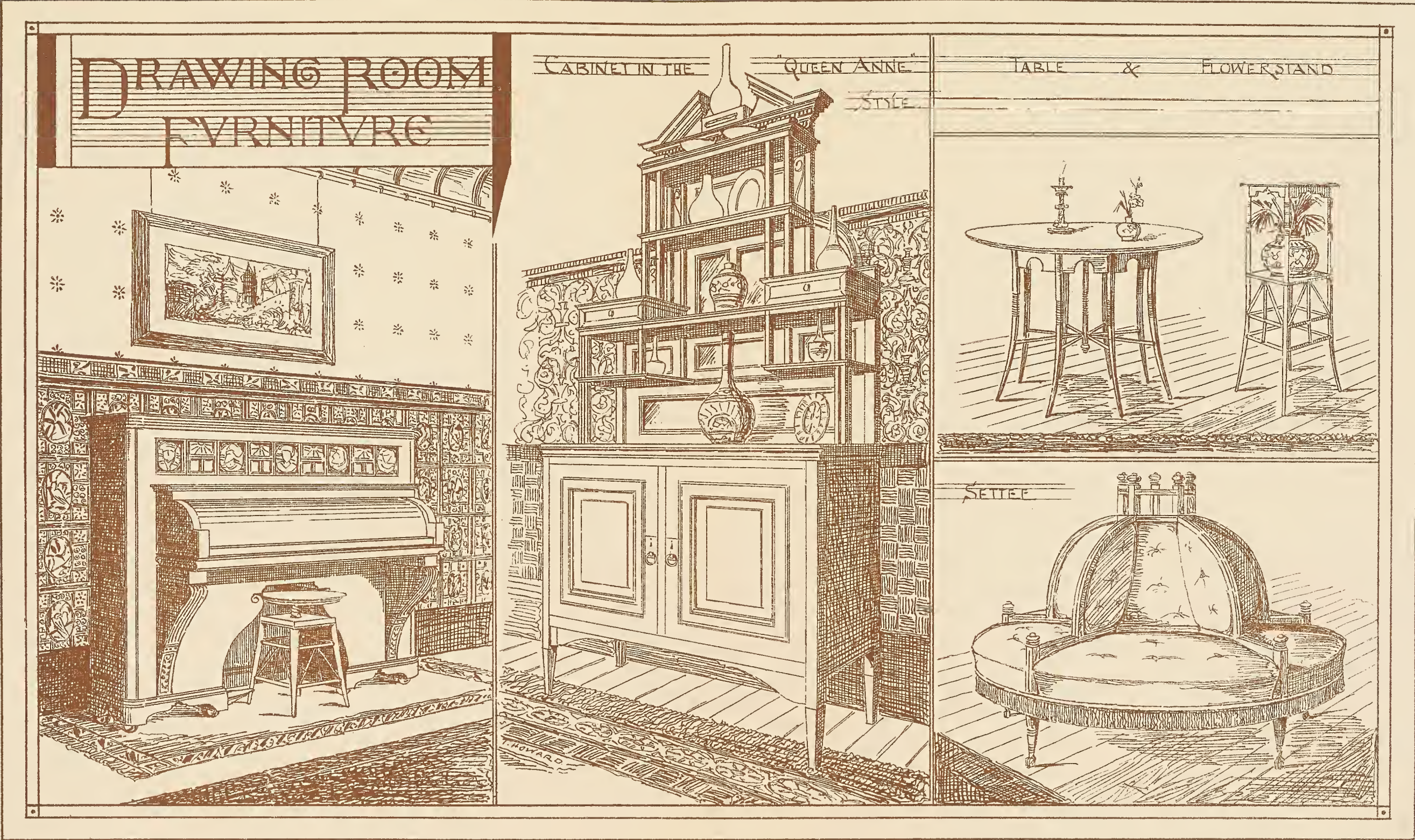


CHAIR

LIBRARY TABLE



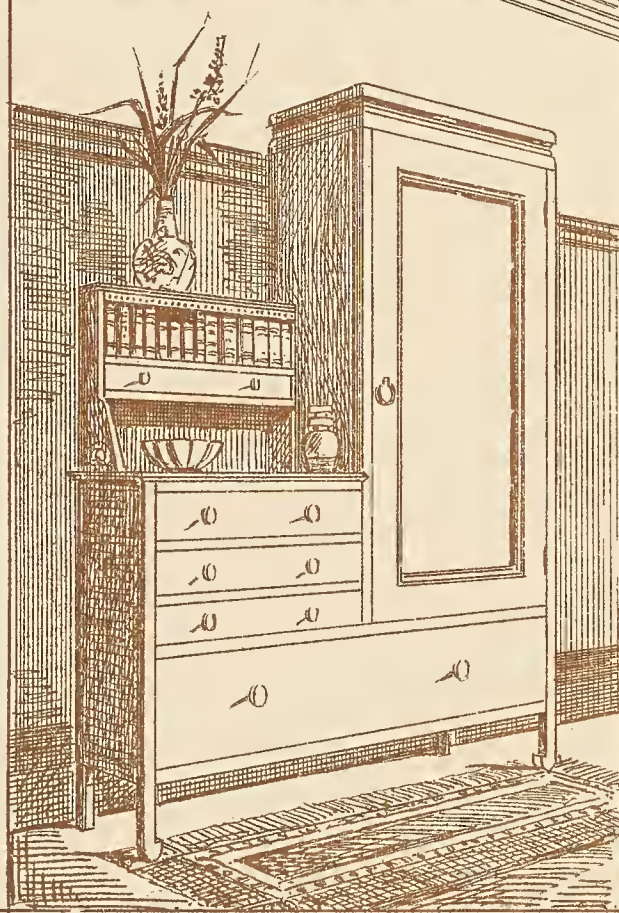
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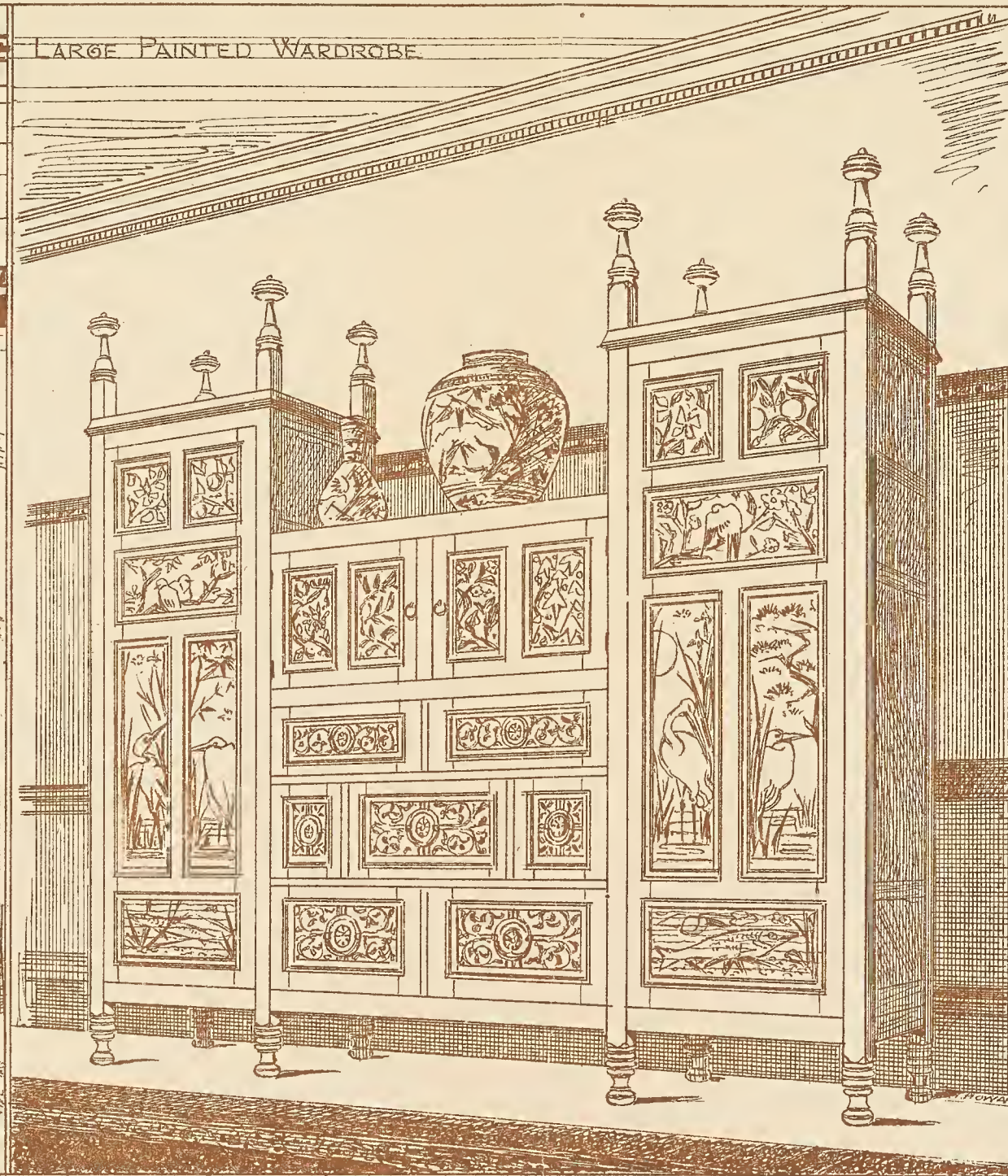
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BED ROOM FURNITURE

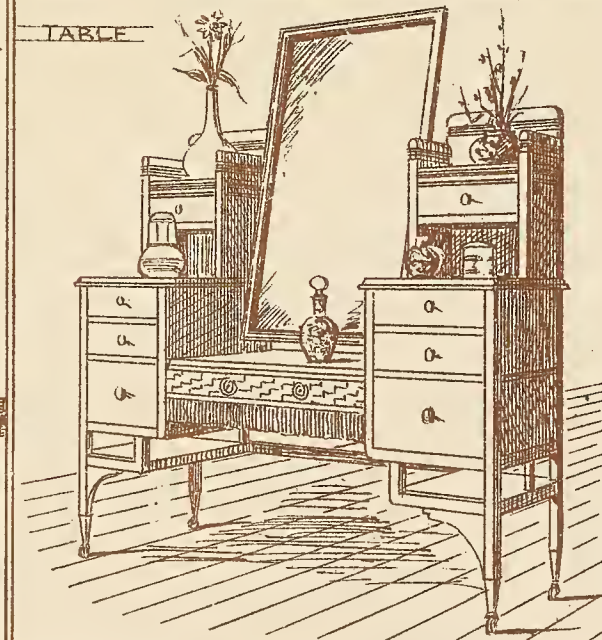
ANGLO-
JAPANESE
WARDROBE



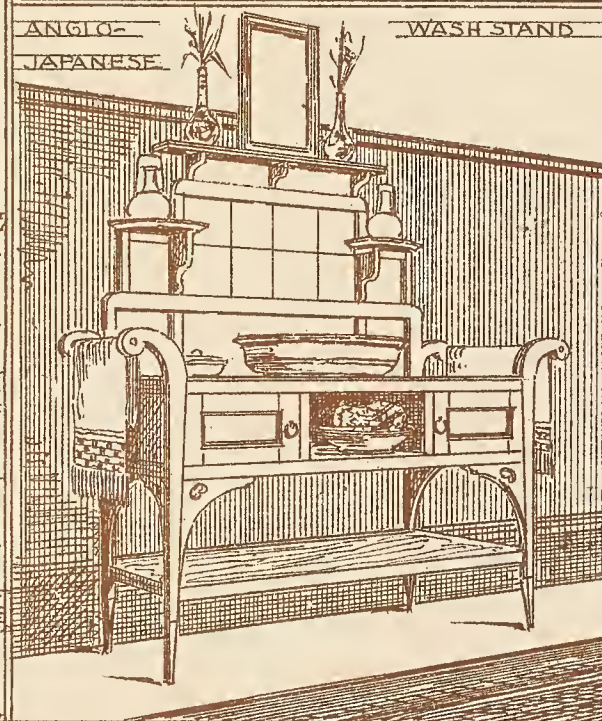
LARGE PAINTED WARDROBE



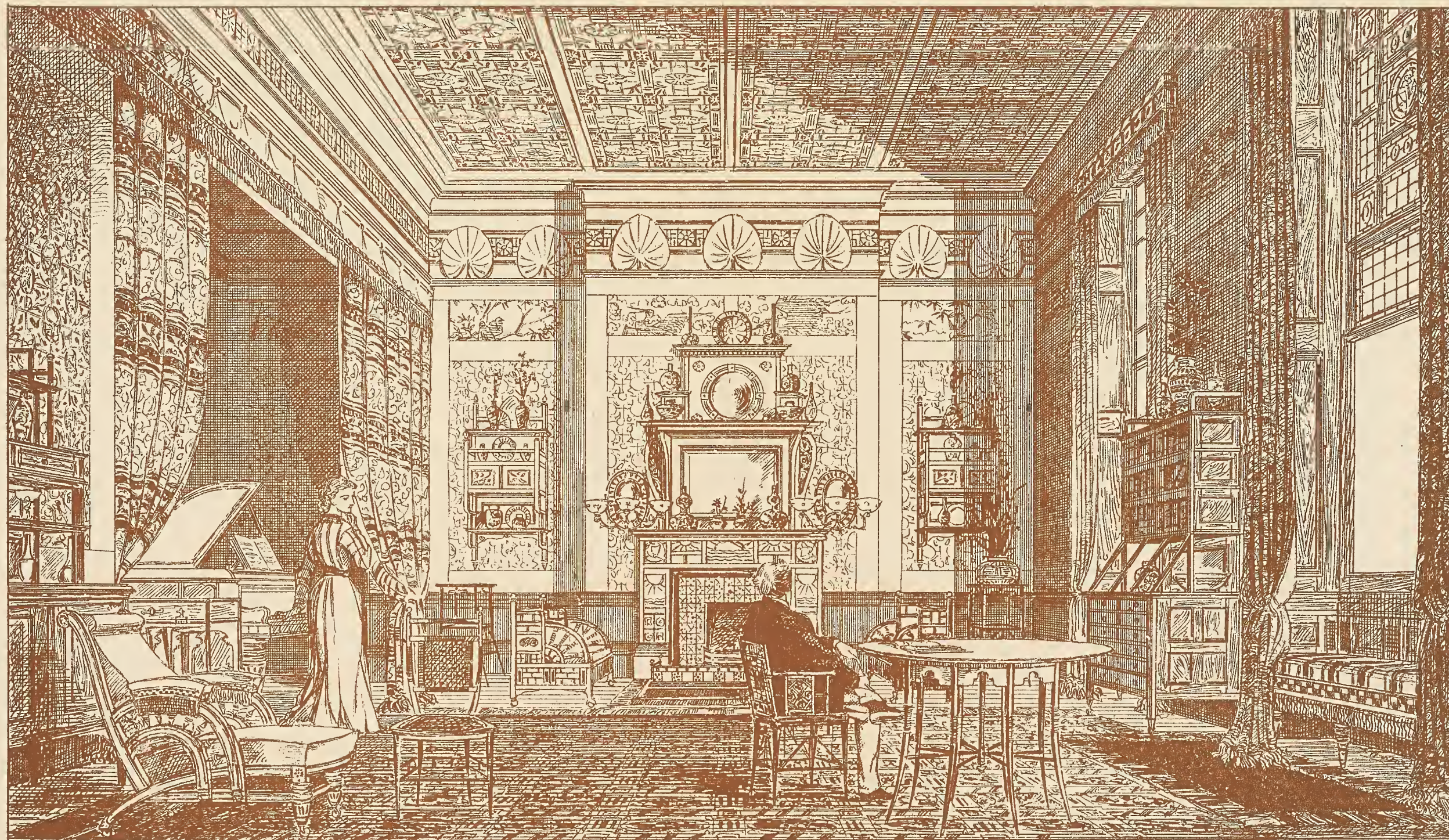
ANGLO- JAPANESE DRESSING-
TABLE



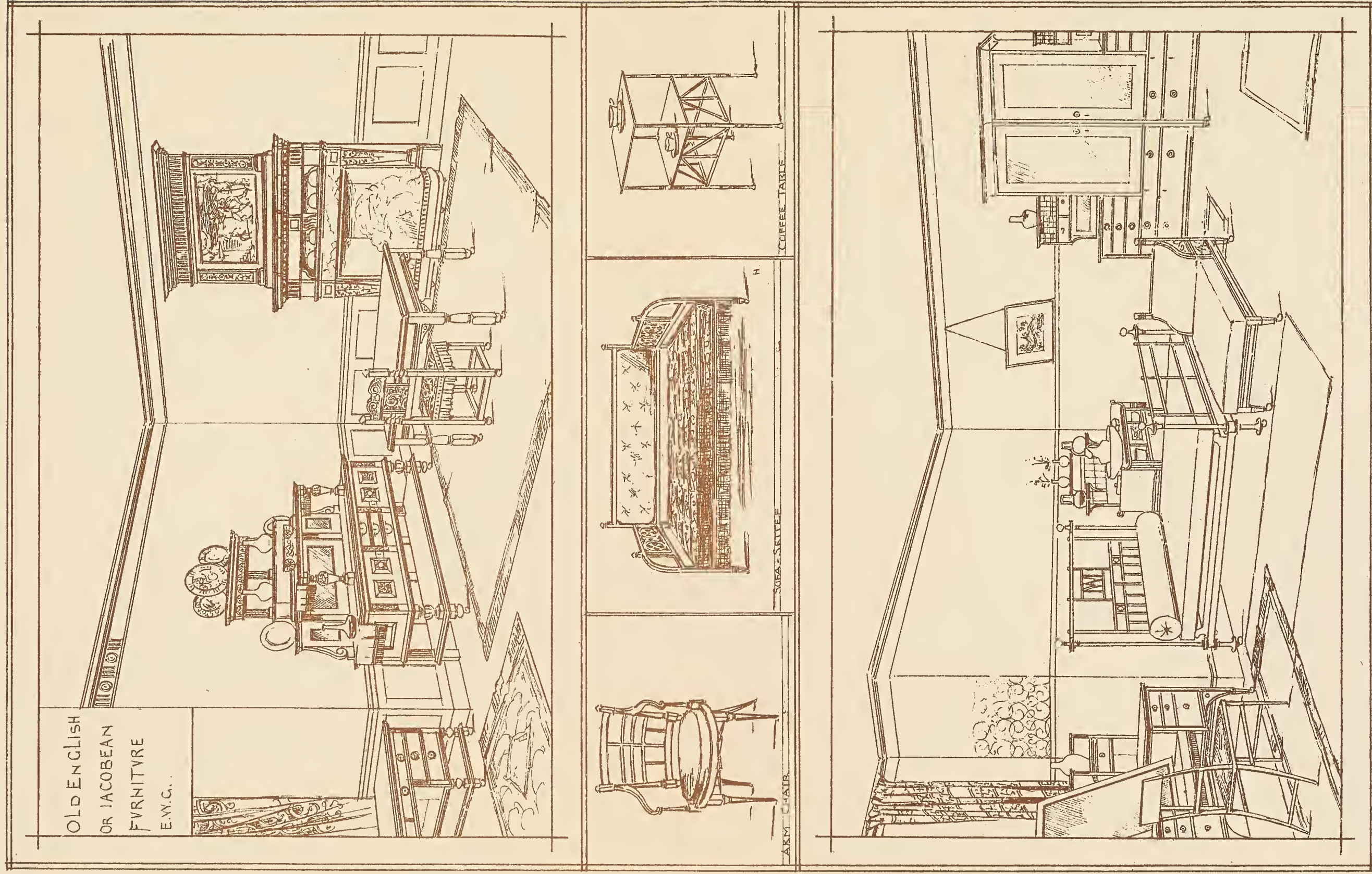
ANGLO- JAPANESE WASH STAND

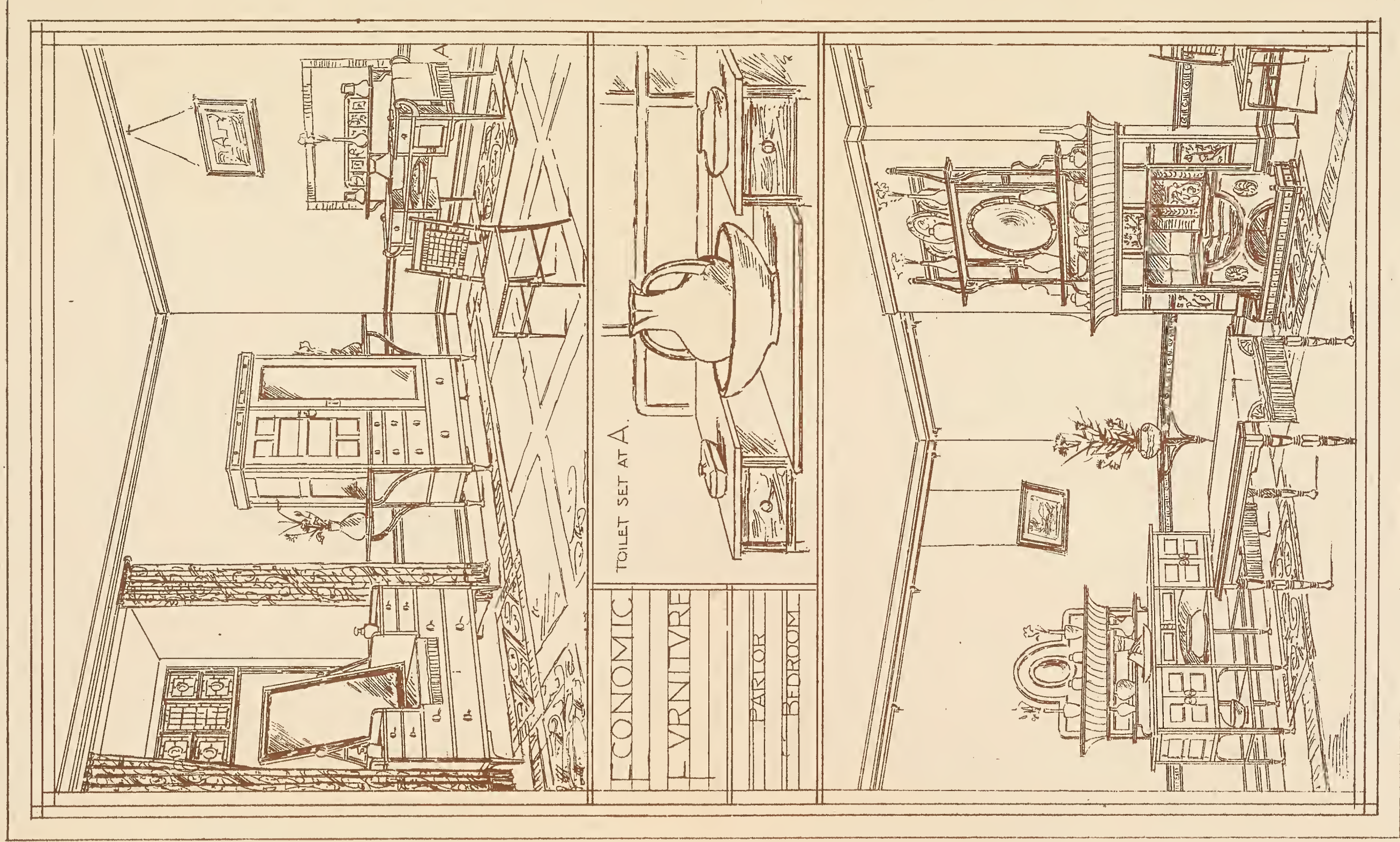


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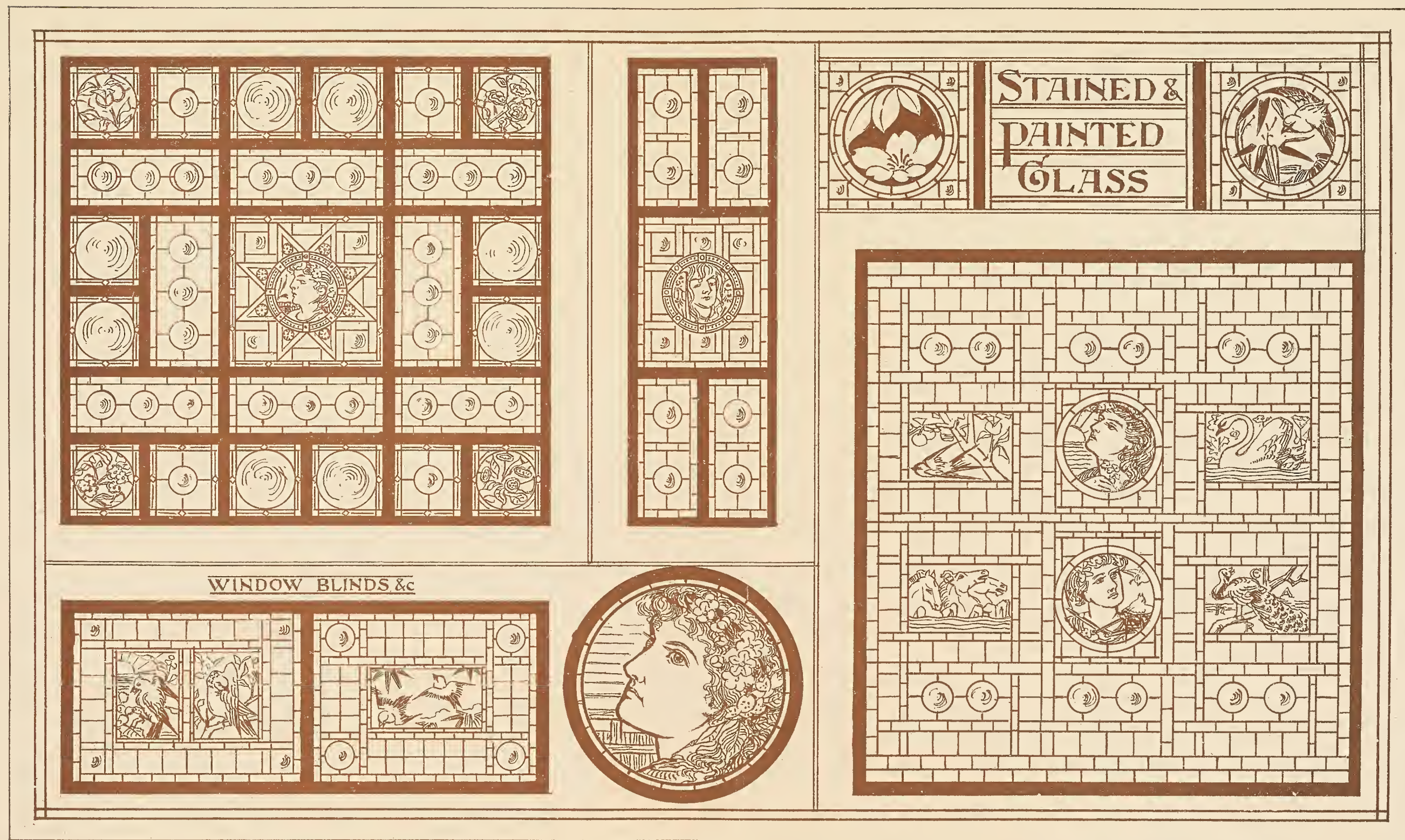


ART FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
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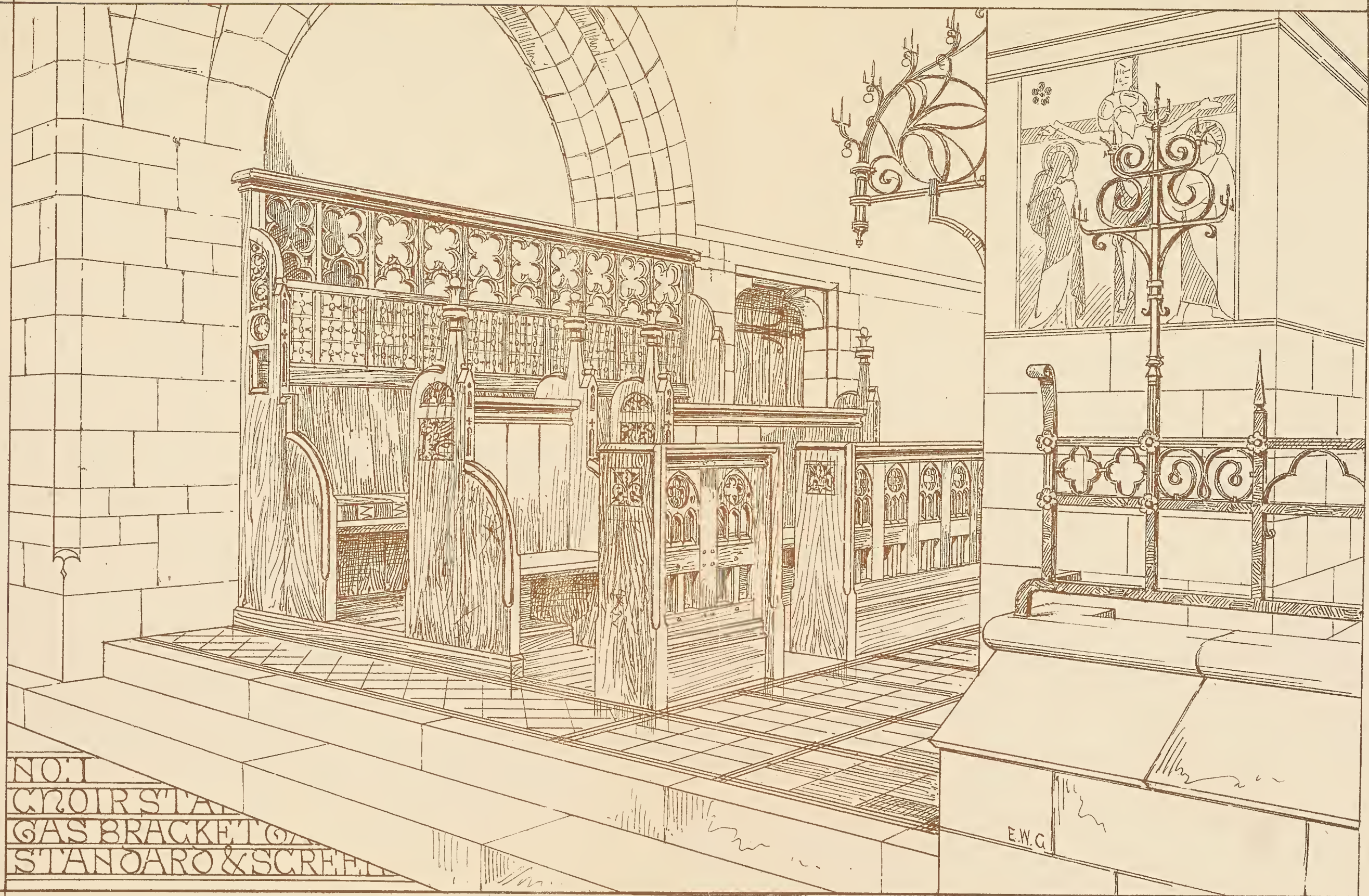




ART FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
21, GRAFTON STREET, COWER STREET, LONDON.



ART FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
21, GRAFTON STREET, COWER STREET, LONDON.



NO. 1
CHOIR STALL
GAS BRACKET
STANDARD & SCREEN

ART FURNITURE WAREHOUSE,
21, GRAFTON STREET, GOWER STREET, LONDON.

